ALL-NEW INTERVIEWS!

STAR TREK: VOYAGER: On the bridge

STARLOG® SCIENCE-FICTION

EXPLORER

#8

WPS37071 U.K.£3.95 AUGUST 1995



JUDGE DREDD The trials of Sylvester Stallone

CONGO Gorilla guy

SPECIES In the lab

Plus: VR.5 **BABYLON 5** and **DOCTOR WHO**

STARLOG GROUP

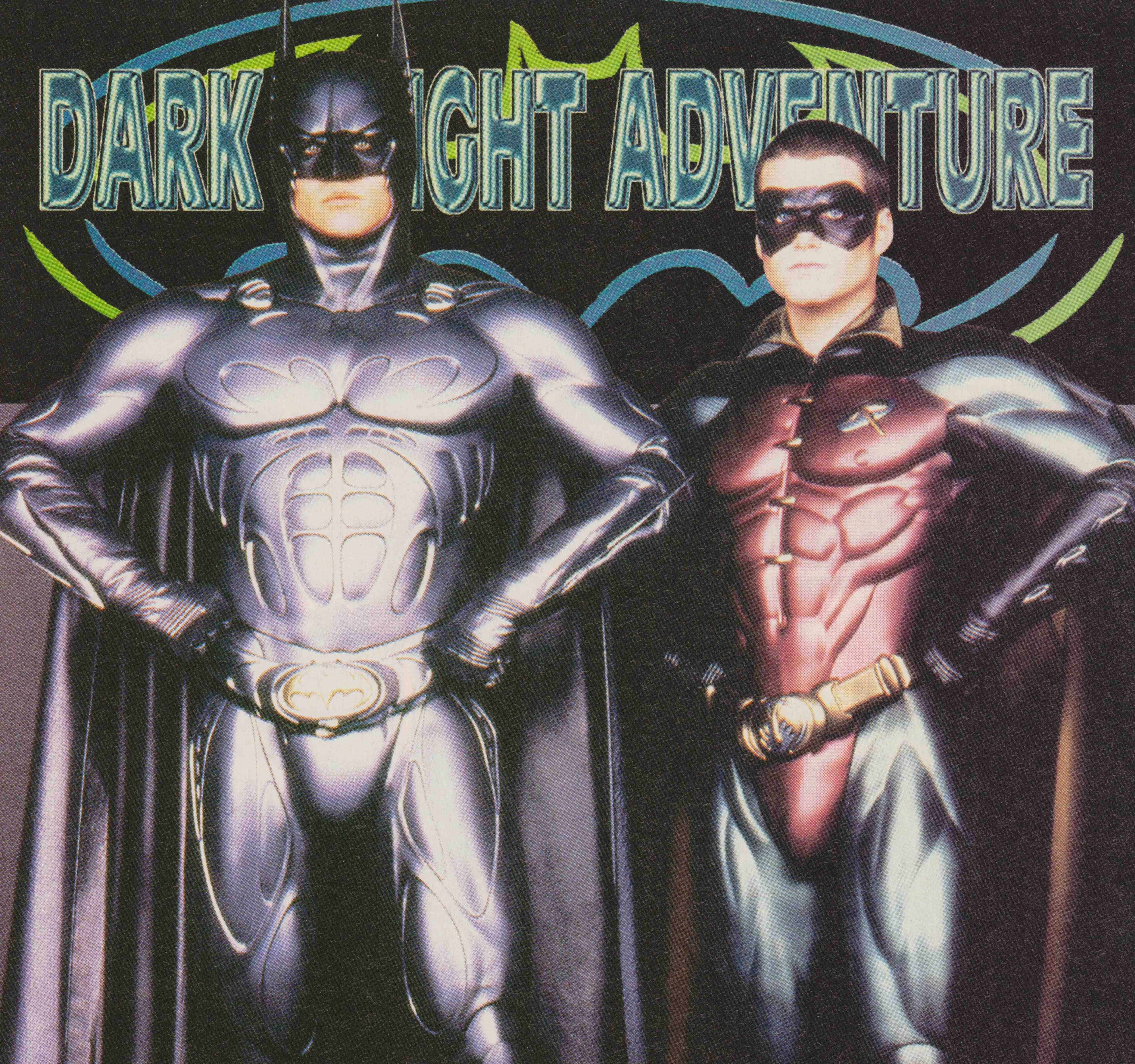
BONUS: 4 POSTERS! THE RIDDLER! JUDGE DREDD! TWO-FACE! BATMAN & ROBIN!

INSIDE GOTHAM'S DARK KNIGHT

$4.99 U.S./$6.50 CANADA

BATMAN FOREVER

DARK KNIGHT ADVENTURE



Producing the new Batman saga is the heroic mission of Peter MacGregor-Scott, action guy

By MARC SHAPIRO

Not too long after completing *The Fugitive*, Peter MacGregor-Scott was asked the inevitable question of what he was going to do next. At that point, the producer wasn't sure. But, he was certain of one thing. "I was sure nobody was going to send me a script about two guys just talking in a room."

True to his prediction, following *The Fugitive* was the offer to oversee the three-ring circus that is *Batman Forever*. And, the good natured, quick-to-laugh MacGregor-Scott found something totally insane in conception and logistics. "I remember Tommy Lee Jones asking me what it was like making a *Batman* movie. I told him it was like making three *Fugitives* in three different cities at the same time."

MacGregor-Scott is making comparisons during an early morning conversation in the *Batman Forever* production office. At this point, the film is, for all intents and purposes, finished—only a handful of pickup shots stand in the way of the company scattering to the four winds. MacGregor-Scott, between snippets of *Batman Forever* info, is continuing to have fun with the reputation that producing *The Fugitive* and a whole slew of Steven Seagal movies has brought him.

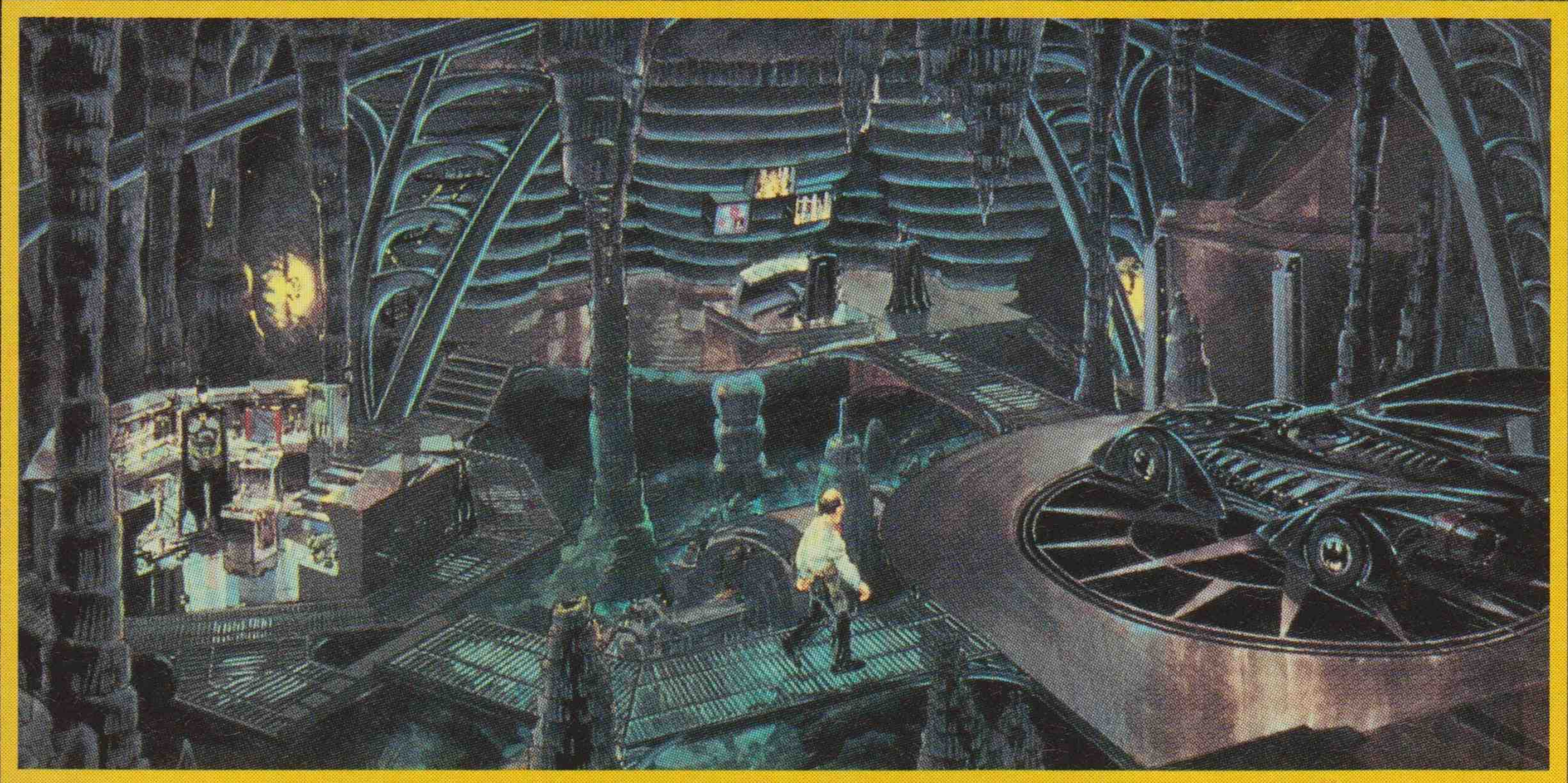
"I started out in this business doing comedies and, suddenly, I was the comedy guy. Now I've done a couple of action movies and suddenly I'm the action guy. Go figure."

Action Forever

MacGregor-Scott claims that "*Batman Forever* was in pre-production forever. The studio [Warner Bros.] has been interested in making a third *Batman* movie for quite a

---

MARC SHAPIRO, STARLOG's West Coast Correspondent, profiled Joel Schumacher in STARLOG #216.



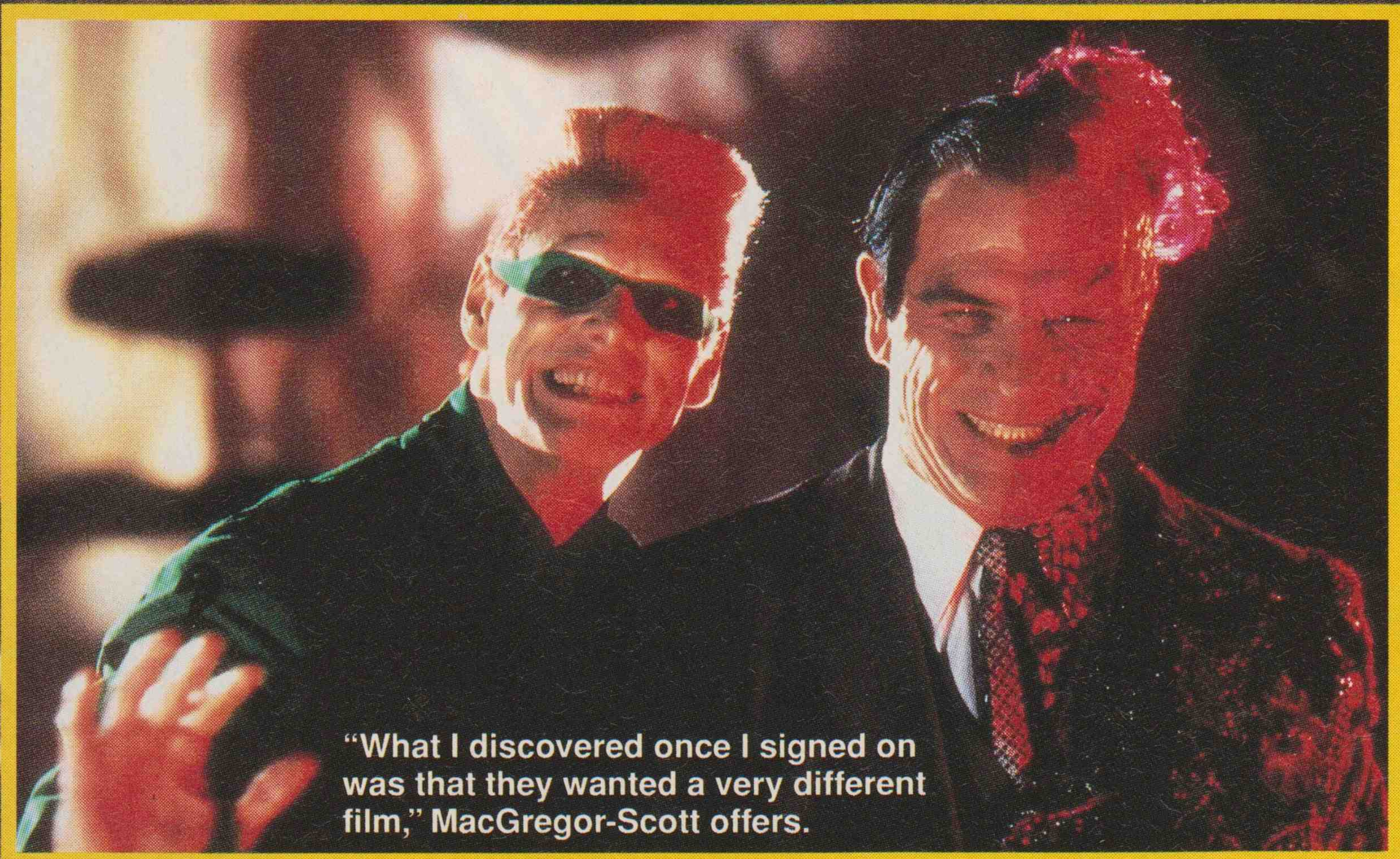
Batman Forever **isn't too different from its predecessors. "What we did was make things lighter," says producer Peter MacGregor-Scott.**

while. There has been talk of doing the *Catwoman* movie and some other considerations. The studio knew that there was still quite a bit that they could do with this franchise.

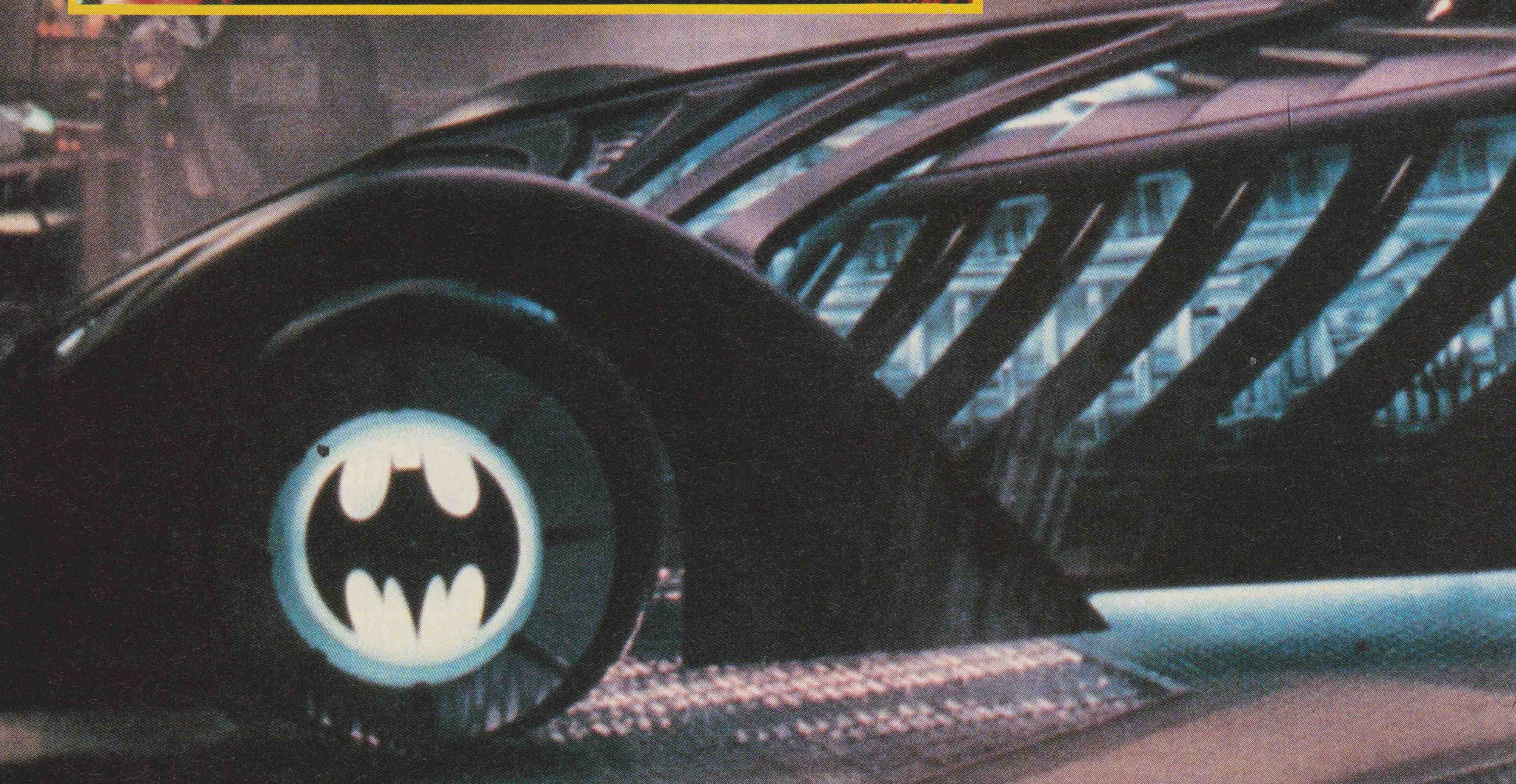
"But what I discovered once I signed on was that they also wanted a very different film. They wanted to stretch the envelope with a new team, a new director, a new cast. They also didn't want this film to be as dark as *Batman Returns*. There was quite a bit of criticism from parents about the second film. The six-year-olds liked it. I know mine did. But the parents just thought it was too dark, and the studio had some concerns."

MacGregor-Scott relates that Tim Burton "wasn't interested in directing *Batman* again." He also reports that as far as everybody knew, Michael Keaton, well into the pre-production on *Batman Forever*, was still going to play the Dark Knight.

"The studio never had a signed contract and Michael had never really committed to the project. I believe that going into *Batman Forever*, everybody's belief was that Michael would be playing Batman. Ultimately, he felt he needed a change. As far as I know, Val Kilmer wasn't waiting in the wings. But I know there had been some considerations and some very broad discussions about what would happen if we didn't do the picture with Michael. So when Michael was not interested in continuing, it wasn't like we were starting from ground zero."



"What I discovered once I signed on was that they wanted a very different film," MacGregor-Scott offers.



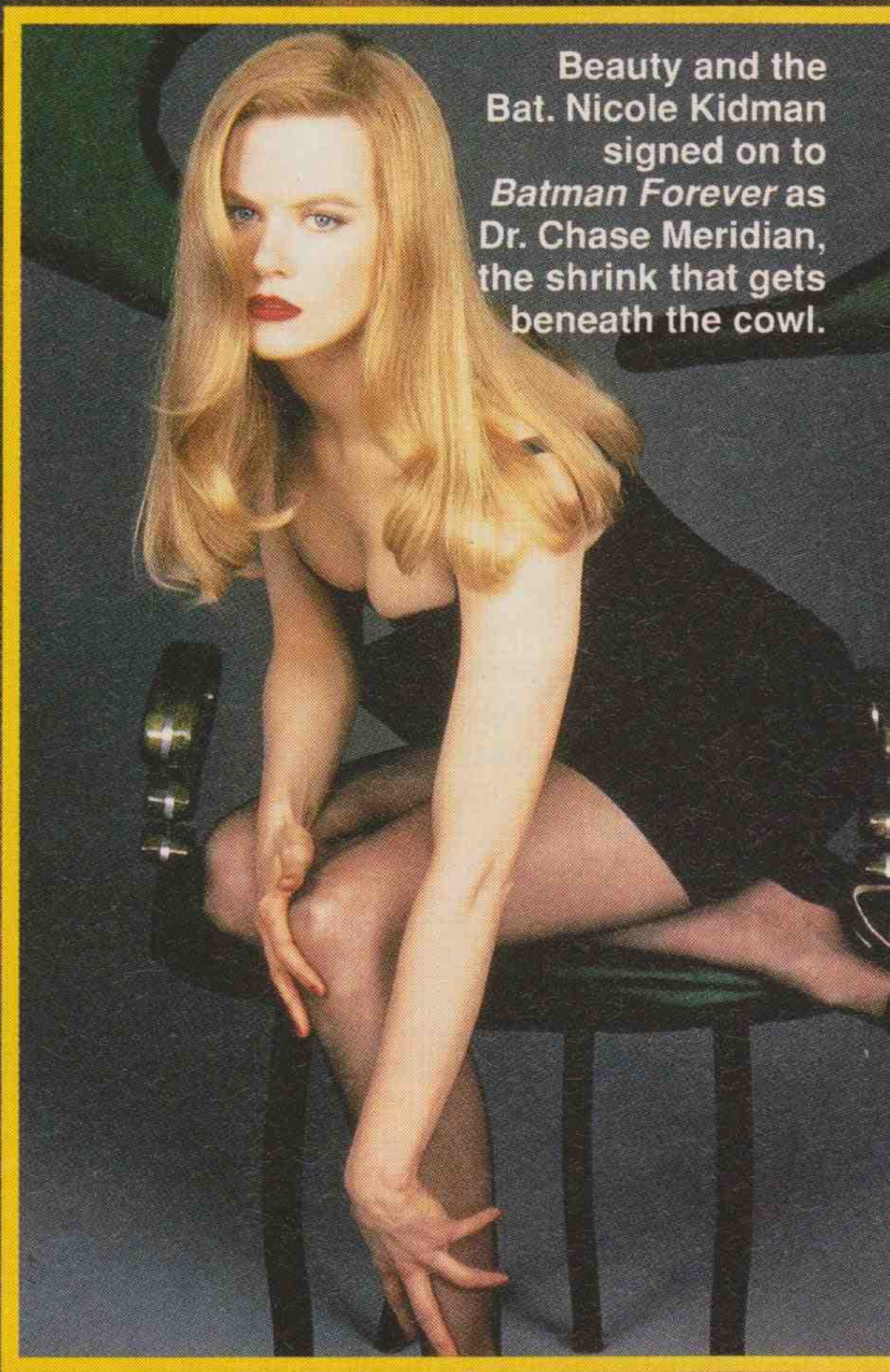
However, the producer points out that despite a Batman entry particularly ripe with change, he doesn't see *Batman Forever* as any kind of risk. "I don't believe we've departed from either the tone or the character of the previous two films. What we've done is just make things lighter."

That lightness extends to the duality of the film's heroes—Batman, teen sidekick Robin (Chris O'Donnell), psychologist Dr. Chase Meridian (Nicole Kidman)—and villains—the Riddler (Jim Carrey) and Two-Face (Tommy Lee Jones). The conflict between their identities—who hates who, who loves who, who wants to kill who—provides the impetus for much of the film.

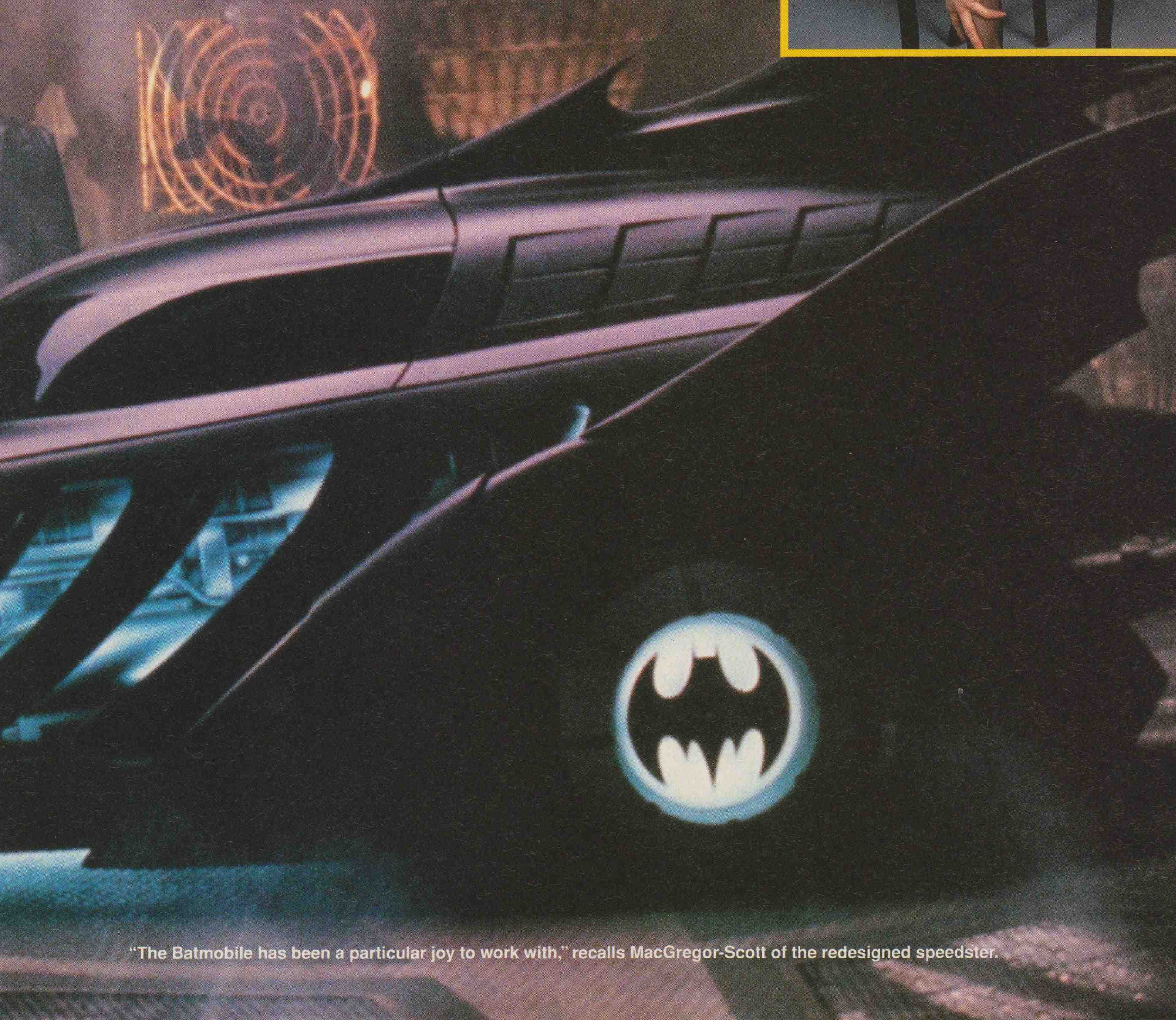
Coming from a background in action movies, MacGregor-Scott is quite happy with the more active moments of this current Bat-epic. "The action in *Batman Forever* is comic book, pure and simple. The violence is minimal, but the action scenes are massive. We have a great many new toys for Batman to play with. The Batmobile has been a particular joy to work with. We have a scene in which it's running along at 100 miles-per-hour and suddenly makes this hair-raising right hand turn. That's the sort of thing you don't have when you're making Seagal movies. Oh, you can make that kind of turn in a Seagal movie but it would be pretty damned rough," he laughs.

He reinforces director Joel Schumacher's observation that *Batman Forever* (scripted by Lee & Janet Scott Batcheler and Akiva Goldsman) was always intended to be a two villain film. "*Batman* films are generally very busy films, and this one is every bit as busy as the second one, whereas I saw the first movie as being very streamlined. But busy doesn't equate with cluttered in this movie. There's a lot to do and there is a lot to go around."

In regards to those villains, MacGregor-Scott once again cites the comic books, rather than the mega darkness of the first two films as the major influence. "The Riddler is more of a clown-like super-villain than any



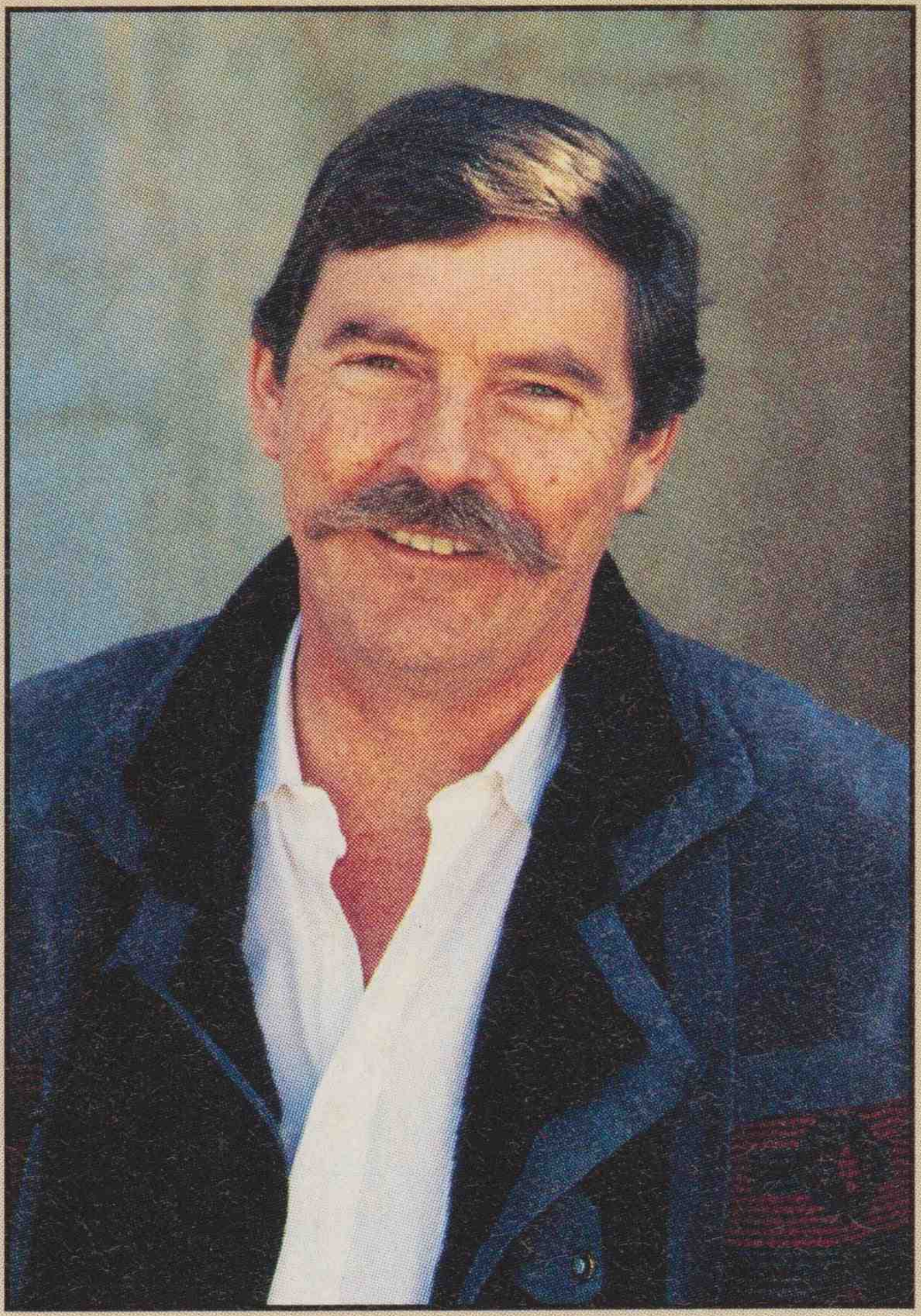
Beauty and the Bat. Nicole Kidman signed on to *Batman Forever* as Dr. Chase Meridian, the shrink that gets beneath the cowl.



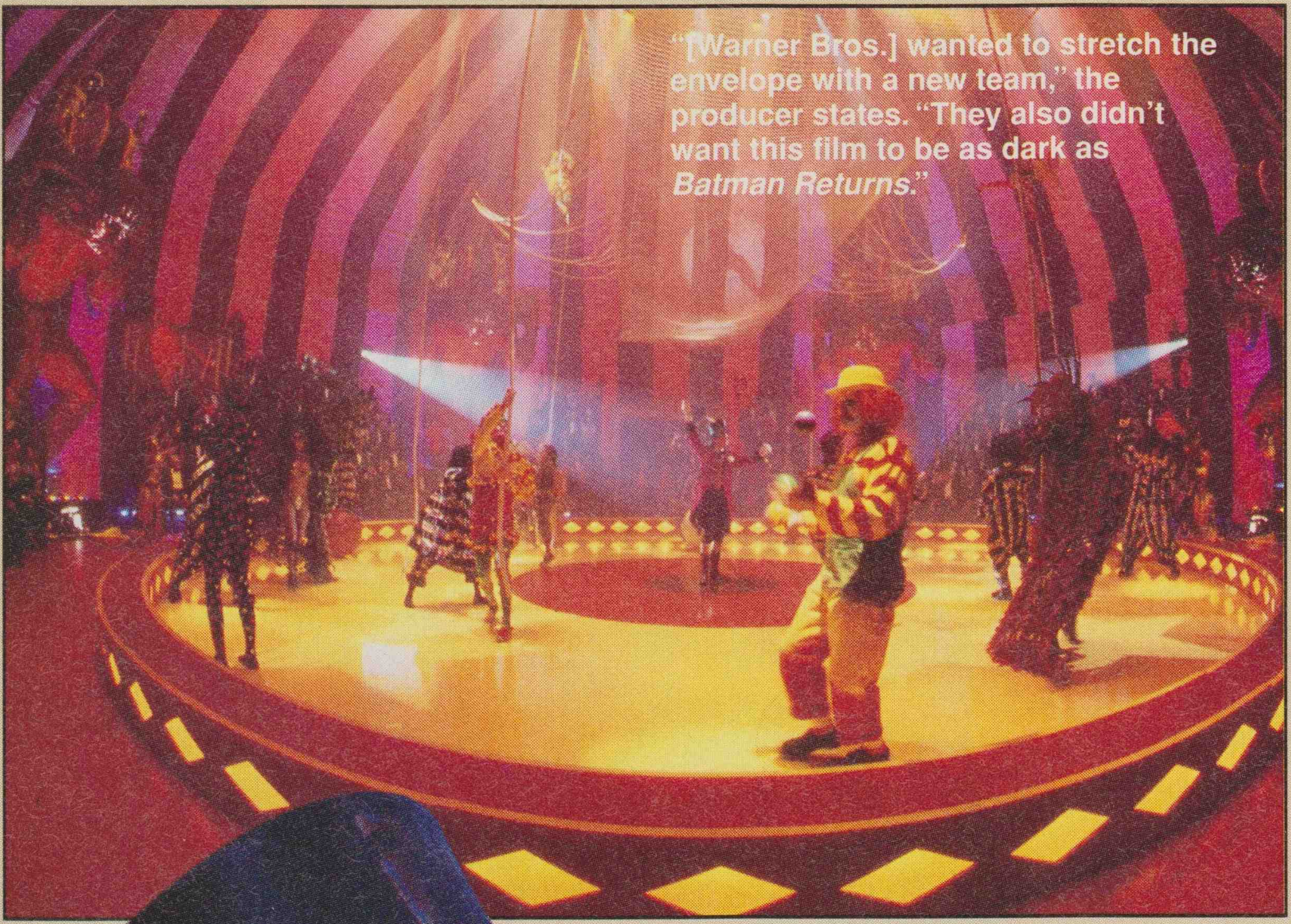
"The Batmobile has been a particular joy to work with," recalls MacGregor-Scott of the redesigned speedster.



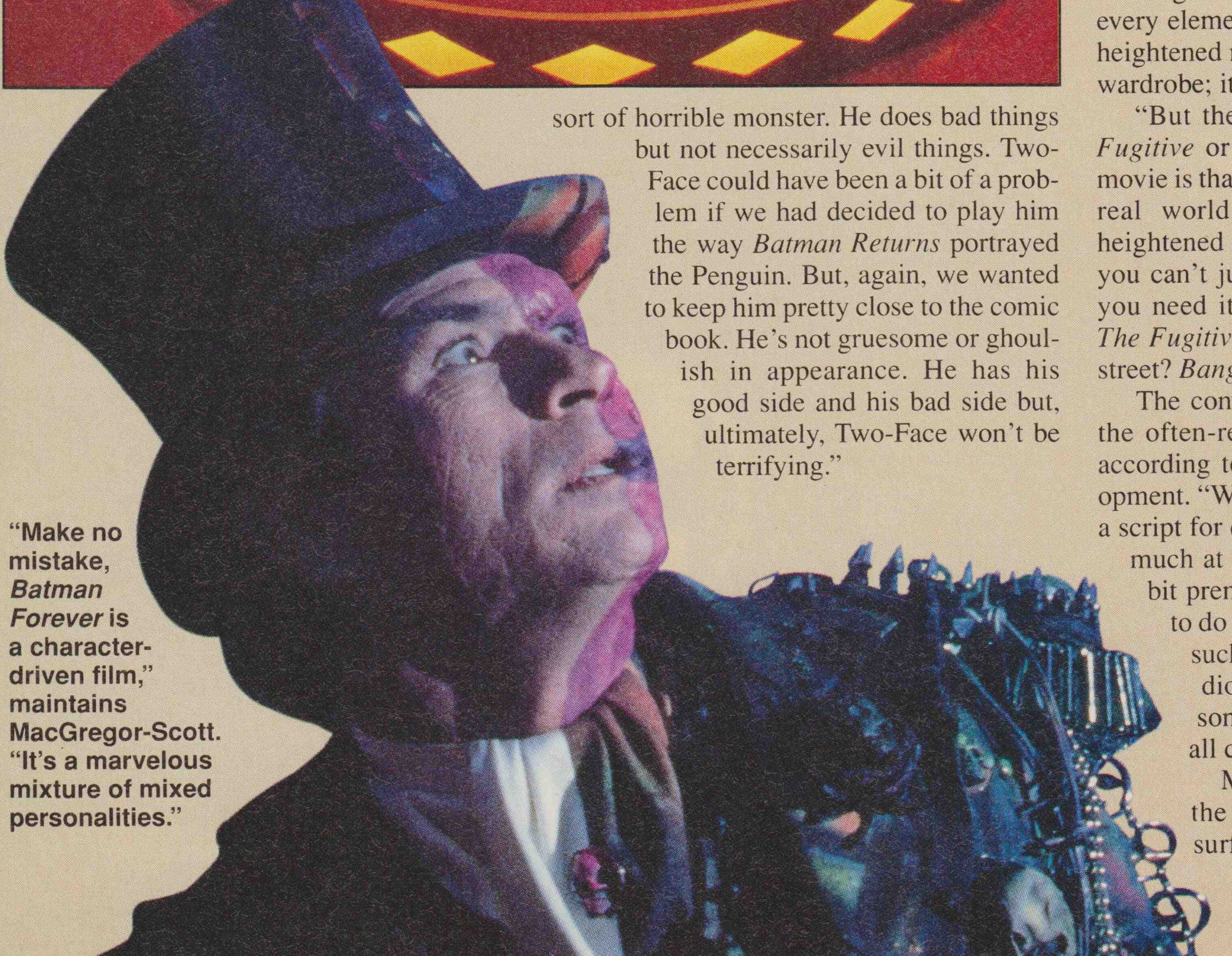
Spectacle sells—and no one knows that better than MacGregor-Scott.



"Tommy Lee Jones [asked] me what it was like making a *Batman* movie," MacGregor-Scott says. "I told him that it was like making three *Fugitives*."



"[Warner Bros.] wanted to stretch the envelope with a new team," the producer states. "They also didn't want this film to be as dark as *Batman Returns*."



"Make no mistake, *Batman Forever* is a character-driven film," maintains MacGregor-Scott. "It's a marvelous mixture of mixed personalities."

sort of horrible monster. He does bad things but not necessarily evil things. Two-Face could have been a bit of a problem if we had decided to play him the way *Batman Returns* portrayed the Penguin. But, again, we wanted to keep him pretty close to the comic book. He's not gruesome or ghoulish in appearance. He has his good side and his bad side but, ultimately, Two-Face won't be terrifying."

MacGregor-Scott was especially thrilled that *Batman Forever* got off to a flying start, shooting on the streets of New York City. "We always felt with this movie that we had to have expanse," he declares. "I never understood why the *Batman* movies never shot in New York before. After all, New York *is* Gotham City. Basically what we ended up doing was Gothamizing the existing architecture, through computer enhancement and physical pieces, to make them look more comic book-like."

Adventure Forever

According to MacGregor-Scott, the Gothamizing of *Batman Forever* didn't stop with tweaking the New York skyline. "We had huge crowd scenes with many extras and every element of those scenes had to have a heightened reality. The hair, the makeup, the wardrobe; it all had to be tweaked.

"But the difference between making a *Fugitive* or a Seagal movie and a *Batman* movie is that in *Batman*, nothing exists in the real world. Everything must have that heightened sense of comic book reality, so you can't just go out and get a lamp when you need it because it doesn't exist. With *The Fugitive*, it's all pretty real. You need a street? *Bang*, you're on a street."

The conversation turns, momentarily, to the often-reported *Fugitive* sequel which, according to MacGregor-Scott, is in development. "Warner Bros. has been working on a script for quite a while. But I can't say too much at this point because it would be a bit premature. I think we would all like to do it again because the first one was such a terrific experience. If the studio gets the script right and Harrison Ford wants to do it again, it will all come together."

MacGregor-Scott gets coy when the inevitable question of money surfaces regarding *Batman Forever*.



Design & Layout: Jim McLernon

In this film, the audience will get to see more of both Wayne Manor and the Batcave than ever before.

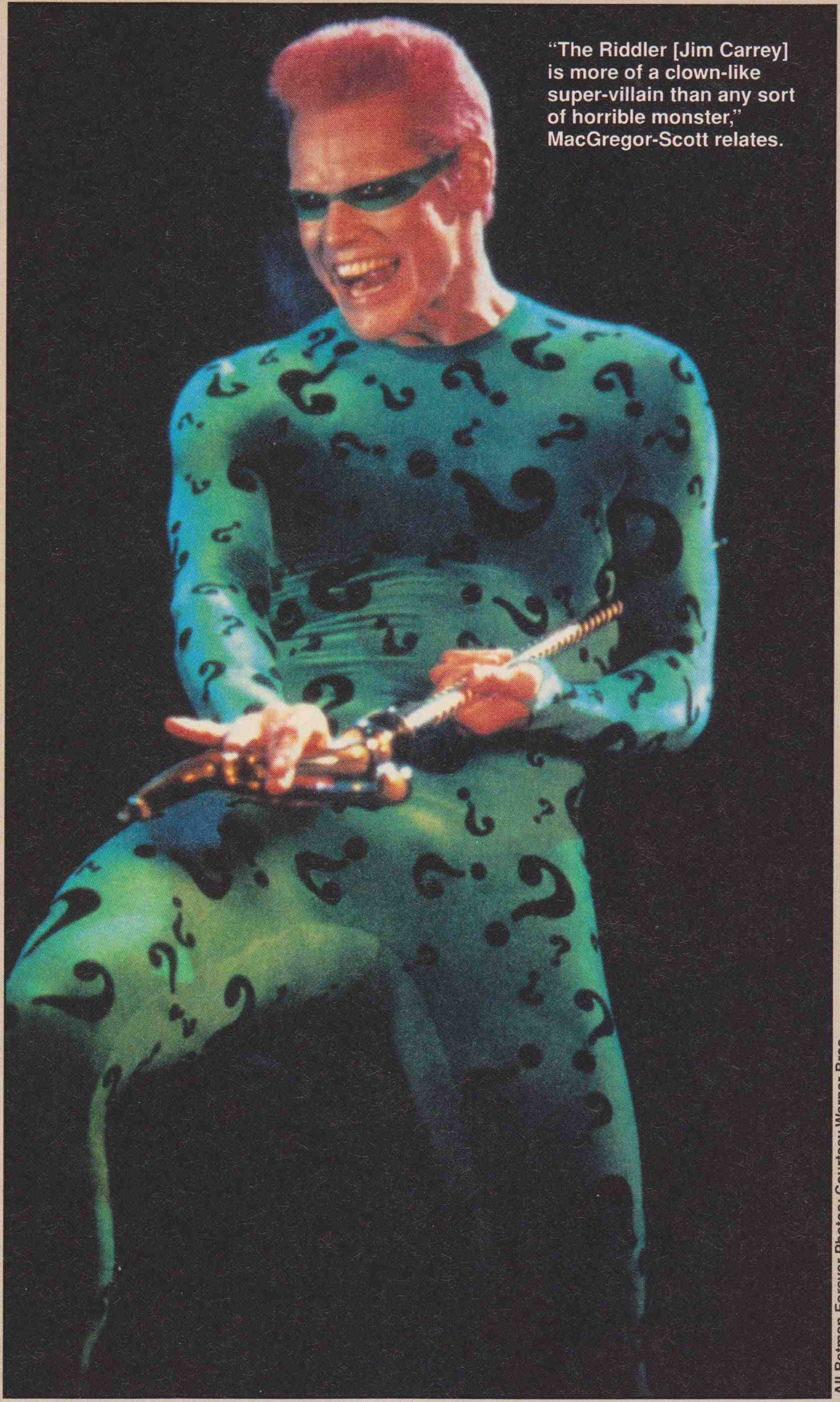
"We did not spend more than *Batman Returns*, but it certainly looks like it. We had the budget that we started with, we lived with it during the film's making and that's what we made the picture for.

"The only corners we cut were those that any smart filmmaker would. This movie was planned to death. Every detail was ironed out well in advance. The studio told us they wanted a great movie and they wanted to know what it was going to cost to make a great movie. So, we gave them a price and they said, 'Is there any way you can bone that a little?' Ultimately, I don't think we cut corners on the end result, which is wonderful.

"Make no mistake, *Batman Forever* is very much a character-driven film. It's a marvelous mixture of dual personalities. Everybody in this film has a kind of split personality. There are the obvious ones like Two-Face and Batman and then there are the ones you have to look a little closer to find. Yes, there are action and thrills, but there are also many different personalities interacting."

With *Batman Forever* behind him, Peter MacGregor-Scott is already eying a couple of action-oriented projects. One thing the producer laughingly says he will avoid like the plague is any hint of a vacation.

"This is what I do with my life. I don't take vacations. I make movies."

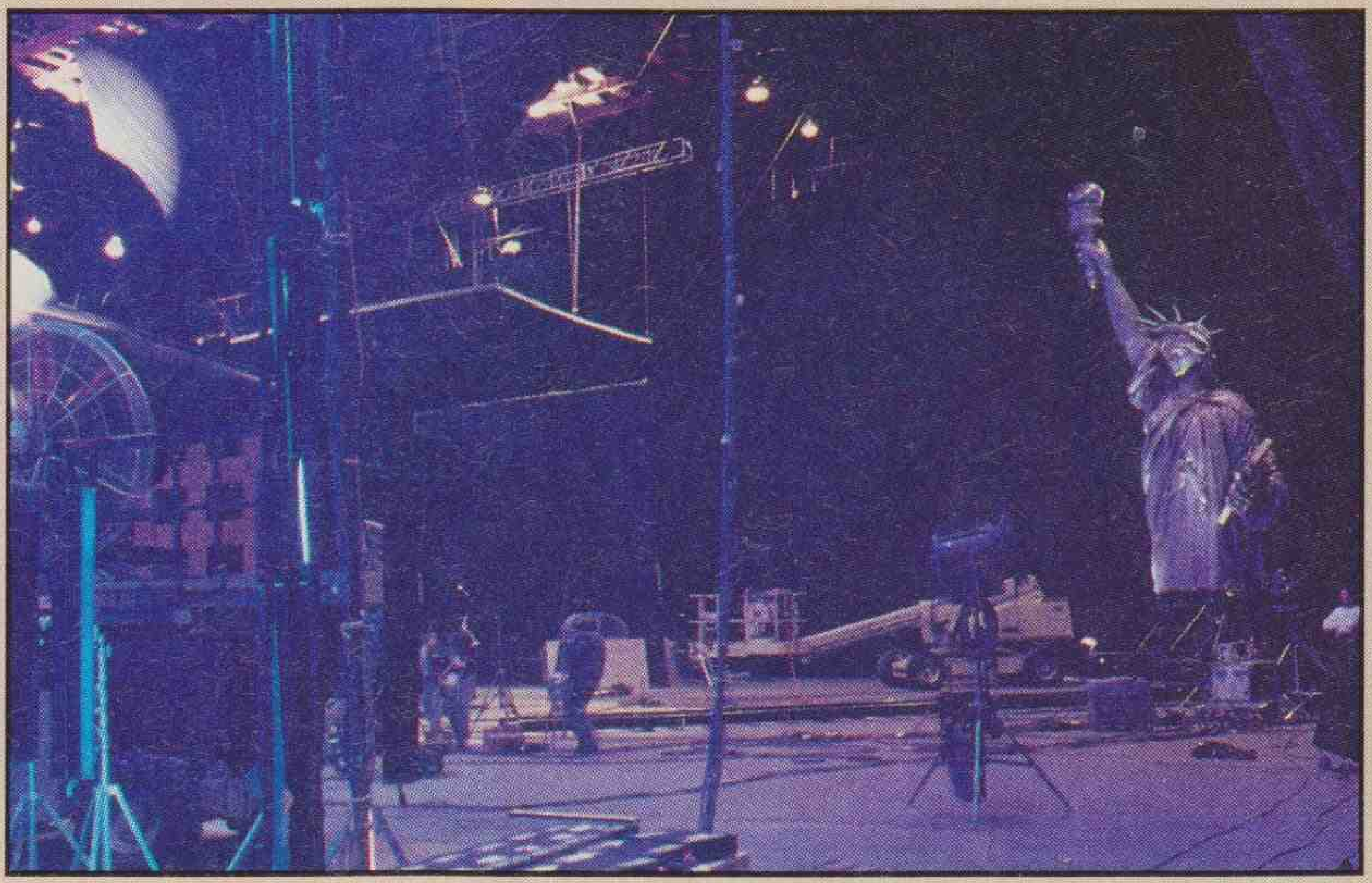


"The Riddler [Jim Carrey] is more of a clown-like super-villain than any sort of horrible monster," MacGregor-Scott relates.

All Batman Forever Photos: Courtesy Warner Bros.



Adding Robin into the Bat-mix made *Batman Forever* a unique entry to the saga.



According to MacGregor-Scott, "In *Batman*, nothing exists in the real world." As a result, the production team had to build just about everything.

Capes & Cowls & Claws, Oh Boy!

When it comes to costuming comic book characters, Bob Ringwood thinks he knows what works and what doesn't. "What works is heightened reality," explains the veteran costume designer. "Nothing outrageous, just normal reality slightly enhanced. What many designers tend to do on a film like this one is go mad and do things in the brightest colors that swamp the actors and give them no place to go. A little is a lot when you're dressing an actor in a film like this."

Ringwood is one of the few constants in the Bat-film world, having applied the rubber and spandex to *Batman*, *Batman Returns* and now *Batman Forever*. His other notable genre work includes *Excalibur*, *Dune* and *The Shadow*. While the tone was pretty much the same on this third Bat outing, Ringwood was instructed that, costume wise, *Forever* was "going in a different direction."

"The studio wanted the costumes to be more cartoony and comic book looking," he explains. "They wanted things lighter and more colorful. Things aren't quite as exaggerated as the Penguin was in *Batman Returns*, but the costumes are definitely going to get your attention."



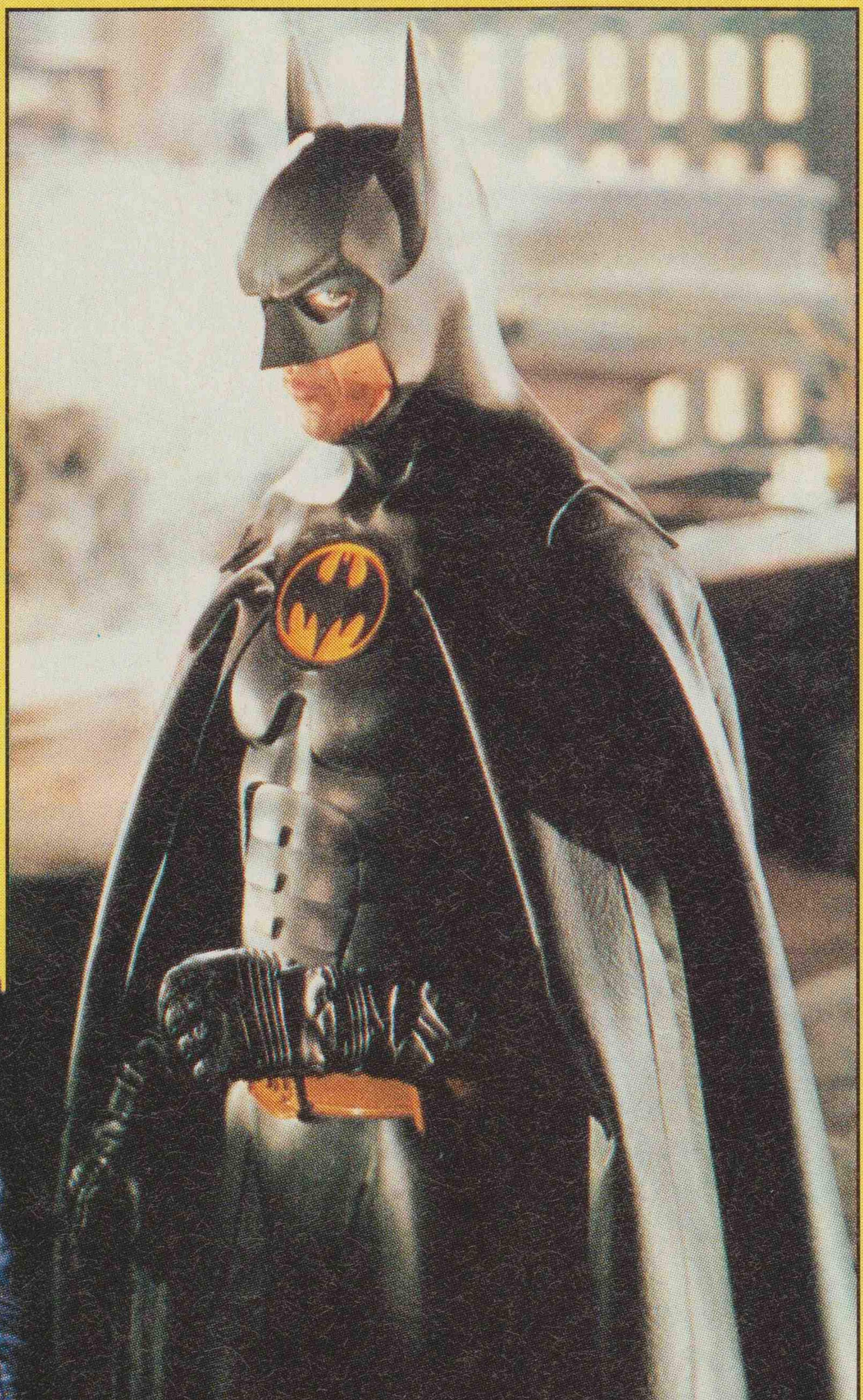
"The new costume makes Val Kilmer appear more panther-like and there's more of a sexuality in the costume," explains Bob Ringwood, tailor to the Dark Knight. "We wasted about seven weeks making things for Michael Keaton."

Ringwood admits that a great deal of time was wasted early in pre-production because the identity of the actor who would play Batman was up in the air. "We wasted about seven weeks making things for Michael Keaton and then we had to scrap it all and start again because Michael and Val Kilmer are so different in size."

The costume designer claims that the revamped Batman costume makes the title crimefighter look taller and sleeker. "The new costume makes Val appear more panther-like and there's more of a sexuality in the costume. It has less of an armor look and more of an animal look that conforms more to the human body. We've also built up the chest and legs. The costume's edges are softer than they were before and we've taken great pains with the cowl to bring more of the contours of Val's face into the design."

As for the Bat-costume worn near the film's conclusion, it has a more hi-tech, mechanical look. "The big thing we always had to keep in mind while we were doing that costume," Ringwood explains, "was that it's still Batman. We had to maintain the familiar silhouette."

Ringwood returned to the comic books to research Robin's togs. For the early sequences, he created a sleek version of the familiar elf-like Boy Wonder outfit. "But near the film's end, Alfred makes Dick a sort of hi-tech version of that costume. Basically, what we did was make a rubber version of the elf costume that contains red and green metallic color."



The notion of costuming the Riddler brings a chuckle to Ringwood. "If you think about it, *all* we had to do was spray Jim Carrey green and put question marks on him," he declares. "What we actually did was create a one-piece, skin-tight costume made out of stretch velvet. We added the bowler hat and painted on the question marks...we were in business.

"With Two-Face, we tried to retain the calm side of Harvey Dent on one side and then do a whole series of mad, extraordinary characters on the other half. With the good side, we went for your typical grey suits. With the other side, we kept changing the image. We did a cowboy one, a heavy leather one... Tommy Lee Jones really got a kick out of what we were doing to him. But that didn't surprise me because his personality is very much like Two-Face's."

Ringwood turns his attention to his previous *Batman* duty (which he discussed in STARLOG #143). "The big thing in the first *Batman* was the Joker. I took the Joker costume from the comics and basically reinterpreted it. But I decided that, even though it would be very colorful, it would also be very restrained. Jack Nicholson is a very expressive actor and I felt that, if it was all said in the costume, he would have no place to go and nothing to do."

In *Batman Returns*, Ringwood set his creative sights on Catwoman and taking director Tim Burton's suggestions to heart. "From the beginning, the basic concept was for a simple leather or rubber fetish costume. But Tim didn't want anything too cute and, in fact, wanted something a bit more brutal. In my research, I found this picture of a woman in a costume that was all sewn together with big, visible stitches. I showed it to Tim and he went wild over it. That approach gave us the opportunity to have the costume fall apart over the course of the movie with the stitches popping out."

He was less satisfied with the Penguin outfit. "Because of the way Danny DeVito was going to play the character, he had to be costumed in a very extreme way. I felt ultimately that the costume was too over the top and outlandish. I felt it could have been more subdued."

Bob Ringwood returns to *Batman Forever*, which he says has been the freest, in terms of the costuming challenges, of all three *Batman* movies.

"The scale of this movie was so big that we didn't even have to stop to think about what we were doing. We just wound up, kept going and didn't stop."

—*Marc Shapiro*